

NEWS RELEASE



OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF CALIFORNIA

San Diego, California

***United States Attorney
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For Immediate Release

NEWS RELEASE SUMMARY - January 27, 2006

United States Attorney Carol C. Lam announced that Oscar Antonio Ortiz, a former Border Patrol agent assigned to the El Cajon Border Patrol Station, pled guilty today in federal district court in San Diego before United States District Court Judge John A. Houston to conspiring to bring in illegal aliens, making a false claim to United States citizenship, making a false statement in the acquisition of a firearm, and being an illegal alien in possession of a firearm.

According to Assistant United States Attorney Michelle Jennings, who prosecuted the case, agents from the North County Regional Gang Task Force (NCRGTF) and Immigration and Customs Enforcement began investigating Oscar Ortiz in connection with the drug distribution activities of a group identified as the Rodriguez Drug Trafficking Organization. Over the course of the investigation, agents intercepted phone conversations in which Oscar Ortiz was conspiring to bring in illegal aliens into the United States at the international border east of the Tecate Port of Entry. In connection with his guilty plea, Ortiz admitted that the number of aliens he had conspired to bring into the country was 100 or more.

Over the course of the investigation, agents learned that Ortiz was not a United States citizen, as he had claimed in his application for employment with the U.S. Border Patrol, but that he was a citizen of Mexico. The investigation also revealed that Ortiz possessed a personal firearm, and that he had falsely claimed on Department of the Treasury Form 4473 (a form required to purchase the weapon) that he was not an alien illegally in the United States.

United States Attorney Lam said, "Ortiz became a Border Patrol agent through fraud, and his conduct threatened the security of the community."

The defendant is scheduled to appear before Judge Houston for sentencing at the United States Courthouse in San Diego, California, on May 12, 2006, at 9:00 a.m.

DEFENDANT

Oscar Antonio Ortiz Case No. 05CR1436-JAH

SUMMARY OF CHARGES

Title 8, United States Code, Sections 1324(a)(1)(A)(i) and (v)(I) - Conspiracy to Bring in Illegal Aliens
Maximum Penalty: 10 years in prison

Title 18, United States Code, Section 911 – False Claim to United States Citizenship
Maximum Penalty: 3 years in prison

Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(a)(6) and 924(a)(2) - False Statement in Acquisition of a Firearm
Maximum Penalty: 10 years in prison

Title 18, United States Code, Sections 922(g)(5)(A) and 924(a)(2) - Illegal Alien in Possession of a Firearm
Maximum Penalty: 10 years in prison

AGENCIES

North County Regional Gang Task Force
Department of Homeland Security, Immigration and Customs Enforcement
Department of Homeland Security, Office of Inspector General